



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL DARRELL MCGRAW SHUTS DOWN ANOTHER
CANADIAN-BASED ADVANCE FEE LOAN SCAM CLAIMING TO BE
LOCATED AT A BOGUS CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA ADDRESS**

Attorney General Darrell McGraw has shut down a Canadian advanced fee loan scam operating under the name New Balance Express. Attorney General McGraw learned of this scam just over two weeks ago after his Consumer Protection Division began receiving complaints from consumers across the country. Consumers who had been ripped off were calling the West Virginia Attorney General's Office because New Balance Express claimed that its office was located at 3508 Stanton Ave., S.E., Unit 714, Charleston, West Virginia - an address that does not exist.

Consumers complained that they were contacted by New Balance after submitting online loan applications. Some consumers applied for a loan directly on New Balance's website. Others filed applications on a lender finder website that apparently referred the loan to New Balance.

New Balance claimed that it could get a loan for anyone, even if the consumer was a poor credit risk, as long as the advanced fees were paid before the loan proceeds were distributed. New Balance told consumers the fees were for advance payments on the loan, insurance and collateral. New Balance told consumers that loan proceeds would be directly deposited to their checking accounts after the consumers wired the payments through Western Union. Unfortunately, after wiring the advanced payments, consumers did not receive the loan proceeds and New Balance stopped responding to consumers' telephone calls and emails.

During McGraw's investigation, New Balance's telephone number stopped working. Their website however, was still on-line and operational until action was taken by McGraw's office.

Working with The Go Daddy Group, Inc., a domain registration company out of Scottsdale, Arizona, the Attorney General's office was successful in shutting down the New Balance Express website as of Friday afternoon, June 9.

"Last week, newbalanceexpress.net, was operational and had the potential to cause additional harm to consumers in West Virginia and around the country. Today, if you attempt to visit the New Balance Express website, you will find a message that states the page cannot be found," said Attorney General McGraw.

"A majority of these advance fee loan scams originating out of Canada have been linked to organized crime according to the Canadian authorities. When consumers submit loan applications, they are giving criminals their social security numbers, bank account numbers and other personal identifiable information that could result in them becoming a victim of identity theft," McGraw warned.

"My office took the steps necessary to protect more innocent consumers from being victimized by this scam. Once again, we are making a clear statement that West Virginia will not be used as a haven for international thieves."

McGraw's office will be referring the consumer files from victims of this scam to the Canadian authorities in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

If you have been victimized by New Balance Express, contact Attorney General McGraw's Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-368-8808 or to download and print a complaint form, please click on the General Complaint Form link at the top of this page.

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